



# MONTANA

The Report on the  
Montana Tourism Industry  
January 2009

*Our mission is to strengthen  
Montana's economy through the  
promotion of the state as a vacation  
destination and film location. By  
maximizing the combined talents  
and abilities of its staff, and with  
guidance from the Governor's  
Tourism Advisory Council, the  
Montana Promotion Division strives  
to promote a quality experience  
to visitors while encouraging  
preservation of Montana's  
environment and quality of life.*

—Montana Promotion Division  
Department of Commerce





***"I'm proud of the work our state has done in promoting Montana as an unparalleled visitor destination. By accentuating our assets and working together, Montana's tourism industry will continue to inspire those to visit and in turn, grow our economy and enhance the well-being of our state."***

—Governor  
Brian Schweitzer

Dear Friends:

It's my pleasure to present to you this ***Report on Montana's Tourism Industry 2009***. This annual report provides a snapshot of the activities and accomplishments of Travel Montana and the Montana Film Office.

In terms of our tourism industry, I would summarize this past year as a year of collaboration and refinement. "We" accomplished a great deal in 2008!

"We" includes dedicated individuals around the state who worked collectively to review and prioritize the five-year vision, goals and action plan for tourism and recreation identified in the ***Montana Tourism and Recreation Strategic Plan*** ([www.travelmontana.mt.gov/2008strategicplan](http://www.travelmontana.mt.gov/2008strategicplan)).

"We," being the Governor-appointed Tourism Advisory Council, with the support and assistance of our Tourism Regions and Convention and Visitors Bureaus, took on the task of creating a ***Montana Tourism and Recreation Charter*** ([www.travelmontana.mt.gov/charter](http://www.travelmontana.mt.gov/charter)). This charter unites our industry under a set of principles that fosters stewardship and commitment to community-based economic development, promotion and preservation of Montana's unique and treasured character.

Most notably, "we," respectfully includes Governor Schweitzer who challenged our industry to create a Montana "brand." Travel Montana, with the advice of the Tourism Advisory Council and the support of our tourism partners, took the lead in a ***statewide tourism branding initiative*** ([www.travelmontana.mt.gov/branding](http://www.travelmontana.mt.gov/branding)). The result of the process is a brand that encompasses Montana's unique attributes and captures the compelling points of difference we have over our competitors. With the participation of our partners, we are looking to integrate Montana's brand into all levels of tourism promotion to create a unified message and powerful presence that will give Montana an advantage in this increasingly competitive travel arena.

With all these tools in place, Montana is well positioned to make its mark in the global travel marketplace and strengthen the state's economy while sustaining this special place we are all fortunate to call home.

I look forward to working with you in the year ahead.

Betsy Baumgart  
Administrator of the Montana Promotion Division  
Department of Commerce

**Governor-Appointed  
Tourism Advisory Council**

Stan Ozark, Chair, Glasgow  
Mark Browning, Vice Chair, Miles City  
Cyndy Andrus, Bozeman  
Sandra Cahill, Livingston  
Ed DesRosier, East Glacier Park  
Rhonda Fitzgerald, Whitefish  
Beverly Harbaugh, Jordan  
Ramona Holt, Lolo  
Dolores Plumage, Chinook  
Rob Ringer, Red Lodge  
Paul Tuss, Havre  
Sandy Watts, Garryowen  
Amber Wood-Jensen, Butte



# MARKETING THE ESSENCE OF MONTANA

Growing Tourism Through Strategic Planning & Innovative Promotion

## Publicity

Travel Montana's publicity program works with travel media to communicate our state's diverse tourism stories. We serve as a clearinghouse for information, as well as provide logistical and financial assistance to the media producing articles and/or programming on Montana. [www.pressroom.visitmt.com](http://www.pressroom.visitmt.com)



## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Generated \$15.7 million in Montana tourism-related editorial exposure—up more than 17% from FY08.
- Directly assisted more than 35 travel journalists, as well as Montana's Tourism Regions/CVBs with their public relations efforts.
- Spearheaded Ski Montana PR event in Boulder, CO, with nine Montana ski areas participating.
- Expanded content on Travel Montana's online pressroom.
- Grew press list by 11%, now communicating with more than 1,500 journalists.
- Presented "Tourism Speaks," a multi-media presentation which demonstrates the positive social and economic impact tourism has on the state, to more than 1,100 Montanans.
- Cultivated media coverage of Montana's tourism and film industry through 46 in-state press interviews.

## Visitor Services

Visitor Information Centers (VICs) are part of an integrated system of travel information dissemination. VIC staff provides travelers with itinerary planning assistance to ensure a successful vacation experience.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- VICs served 215,159 travelers May through September.
- Visitors assisted by VIC staff lengthened their stay by 31%.
- VICs provided free WiFi service to all customers.
- Made In Montana products are now displayed at VICs.

## Group Tours

The Group Travel program provides tour operators with the tools to build a successful group tour product. Group tours can bring a substantial amount of money to our state. For example, a touring motorcoach of 46 passengers making an overnight stay contributes \$5,000 to \$7,000 per day to the local economy. [www.montanagroups.com](http://www.montanagroups.com)

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Coordinated Group Market cooperative advertising campaign in major trade publications.
- Attended three national conventions promoting Montana—National Tour Association (NTA), American Bus Association (ABA) and BankTravel.

## Meetings and Conventions

The Meetings and Conventions program promotes Montana as a convention destination. [www.montanameetings.com](http://www.montanameetings.com)

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

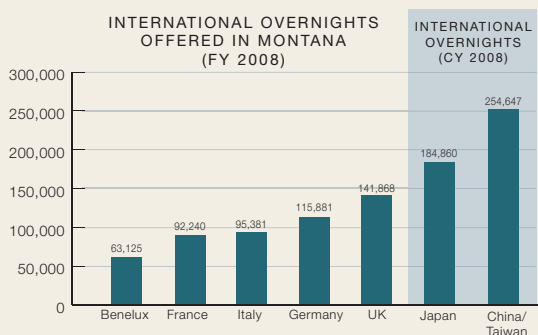
- "Trade Show Assistance Program" provided financial support for tourism partners to attend trade shows.
- Coordinated Meetings and Convention cooperative print advertising in major trade publications and online advertising.





## Overseas Marketing

Travel Montana continues marketing in Europe, Japan and Taiwan along with recent additions of Scandinavia and Australia. Success is growing with an increase in overnights offered in each market, and our new markets are showing great potential.



## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Montana co-hosted the Rocky Mountain International (RMI) Mega Fam where 34 tour operators attended representing eight countries.
- Thirty one European tour operators met with 26 Montana suppliers at the RMI Roundup and Travel Montana hosted a post RMI Roundup familiarization tour.
- Travel Montana participated in eight international trade shows.

## E-Marketing

In 2008, Travel Montana's primary web site brought Montana to the screens of more than seven million people. The Internet continues to provide quality travel information and services that meet the needs of our users. [www.visitmt.com](http://www.visitmt.com)

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Added 365 sites, services and events to our database for a total of 8,536 listings available to our users.
- Created fresh ideas and content to our web site, including the following event and informational pages:

**Dining and Restaurants.** Check out authentic dining, Montana Recipes, where to eat "On the Go" and discover the best Montana Sweets and Treats.

### Microbrew Montana.

In cooperation with [www.newwest.net](http://www.newwest.net) visitors can find out how one of our most famous microbrews, Moose Drool, was named and where you can find the "Temple of Malt."



### Farmers Markets & Ag Tours.

Travelers can visit where Montana products, from cheeses to cherries, are produced or learn about the Hands of Harvest Agricultural Tour.

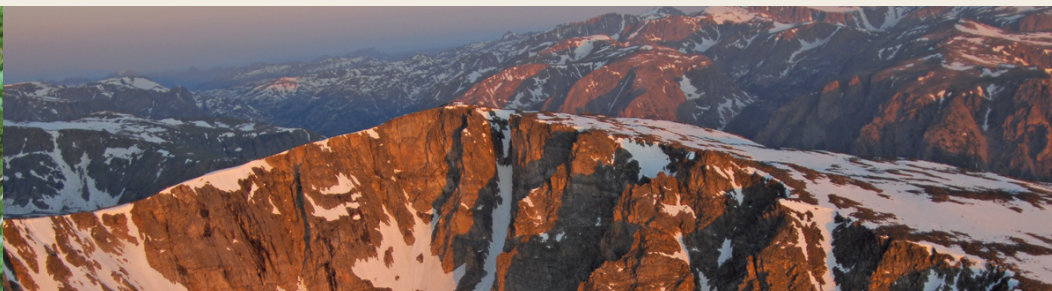
**A Rodeo Primer.** Explore some of Montana's most exciting events from "Montana's Biggest Little Rodeo" to the "Montana Mardi Gras."

- Added streaming video to our winter site. Each ski area has a custom video, shot on site, featuring family friendly and adventurous footage of what makes each area unique and exciting. Also featured are the charming communities you'll encounter and the scenic beauty surrounding all sixteen Montana ski areas and resorts.



## CUSTOMERS SERVED

Travel counselor-assisted calls	157,005
Featured business listings on web	8,536
All Travel Montana web sites user sessions	11.2 million
Generated vacation packet requests	197,194
Added new travel info distribution sites	558
Total non-resident visitors in 2008	10.7 million



# UNIQUELY MONTANA

## Setting Montana Apart

### Consumer Marketing

The consumer marketing program develops advertising and promotional campaigns to positively and uniquely brand Montana, differentiate the state as a travel destination, and increase tourism from domestic and Canadian travelers. Nationwide tourism trends, statistics from the Institute of Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) and the results of contracted research studies help determine the overall marketing strategy.

#### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Led a successful branding initiative.
- Created advertising messages that supported Montana's image of spectacular nature, breathtaking experiences and relaxed way-of-life.
- Placed more than \$3.5 million in media advertising that produced more than 170 million consumer impressions.



- Contracted a research study on the effectiveness of Travel Montana's 2007 warm season magazine advertising.

- Generated 11,455 trips to Montana.
- Average visitor party spent \$1,275.
- For every dollar spent on magazine advertising, \$21 is spent in Montana.

Source: Strategic Marketing & Research, Inc.

- Developed partnerships with private and public entities to extend the advertising budget.

#### **Montana Cast & Camp Luxury Fly Fishing Vacation—**

Partnered with Orvis to promote Montana, leveraging Orvis' online presence and retail locations in 41 major cities to generate awareness, interest and more than 40,000 leads.



#### **Sled the Rockies—**

Partnered with Wyoming and Idaho to promote snowmobiling in the northern Rockies.

**3 Parks—**Partnered with Wyoming and lodging concessionaires to promote Glacier, Grand Teton and Yellowstone national parks vacations.

- Targeted national and regional (including western Canada) audiences, with a focus on key market cities such as Minneapolis/St. Paul, Seattle, Chicago, Atlanta and Dallas.

### Publications

The publication's program produces 1.65 million pieces of literature—guides, planners, brochures and maps—each year. These publications offer Montana businesses affordable advertising opportunities to reach the travel market. Annual distribution is through direct mail, chambers of commerce, visitor centers, consumer shows, conventions and local businesses.



#### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Conducted a usability study testing content and usefulness of guides.
- Coordinated guide layouts, text and photos with our web site and consumer marketing for a consistent branding message.





# BIG SKY ON THE SILVER SCREEN

Bringing Filmmakers, and Their Budgets, to Montana

## Montana Film Office

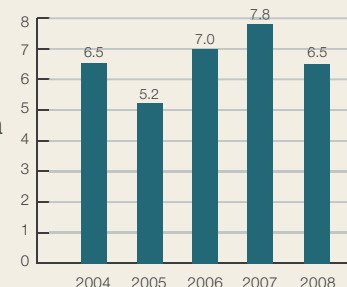
The Montana Film Office brings economic development to the state by promoting Montana as a motion picture and television production destination. [www.montanafilm.com](http://www.montanafilm.com)

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Promoted and administered the Big Sky on the Big Screen Act, enacted by the 2005 Legislature. This program keeps Montana competitive among other states and nations.
- Certified more than 22 new productions for the Big Sky on the Big Screen Act, a 30% increase over 2007.
- Assisted in bringing more than 70 productions to Montana with an estimated direct economic impact of \$6.5 million and 168 FTE jobs.

- Hosted 400,000 user sessions on our web site, which lists more than 300 Montana crew members and 700 Montana businesses that provide services to the industry.
- Assisted in bringing in two notable feature films to Montana—Jack London's classic "Call of the Wild," shot in Lincoln and Philipsburg and "My Sisters Keeper," a Warner Brothers film filmed in Glacier National Park and along Highway 89. These productions brought more than \$1 million to these local communities.

MONTANA REVENUE (IN MILLIONS) FROM FILMING



# STRENGTHENING OUR TOURISM COMMUNITIES

## The Tourism Development and Education Program

The program focuses on technical and financial assistance for tourism-related projects.

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program (TIIP) Grants provided \$300,000 for six tourism facility projects valued at \$5.64 million.

**Bozeman**—Museum of the Rockies

**Missoula**—International Choral Festival

**Helena**—Helena Presents/ Myrna Loy Center

**West Yellowstone**—Grizzly & Wolf Discovery Center

**Billings**—Yellowstone Art Museum

**Deer Lodge**—Rialto Community Theatre, Inc.

- 2008 Montana Governor's Conference on Tourism & Recreation provided training and industry information to 420 attendees.
- The Superhost program provided training for 1,870 Montanans.

## 2008 Special Events Grant Program

The SEGP program develops new and/or enriches existing community-based events to create sustainable economic development.

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Provided \$61,500 for new, annual events in seven Montana communities:

**Troy**—Kootenai River Bluegrass Festival

**Harlowton**—Festival of the Wind

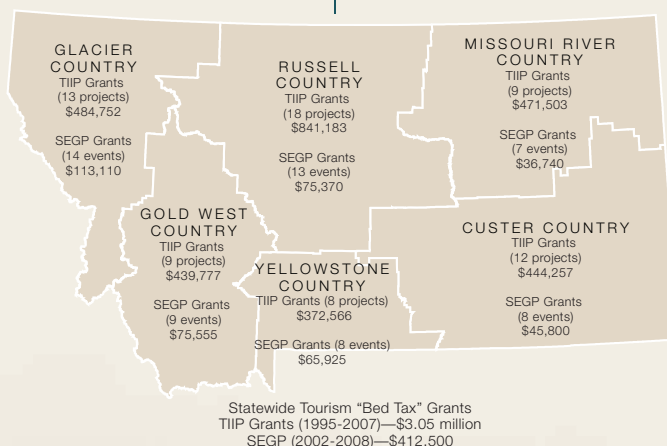
**Glendive**—Sweet Home Miss Montana Week

**Fairfield**—Fairfield Days Gone By

**Missoula**—Missoula Marathon

**Kalispell**—Festival Amadeus

**Great Falls**—A Night at the Ozark



The \$3 million in TIIP funds (1995-2008) have leveraged \$36 million in other private and public funds for a 12/1 match.



## A NETWORK OF SUCCESS

The contribution tourism makes to Montana's economy and the quality visitor experiences Montana delivers could not be possible without our dedicated and capable partners throughout the state. These partners, such as our Tourism Advisory Council, who give so valuably of their time and expertise, are the key components to our

success. Travel Montana and the Montana Film Office fully recognize that in order to ensure that tourism continues to be a viable growth industry for our state, we must continue to foster and encourage the active and enthusiastic participation of these stakeholders.

### Recognizing our Valuable Partners

#### Tourism Regions

Custer Country—[www.custer.visitmt.com](http://www.custer.visitmt.com)

Glacier Country—[www.glacier.visitmt.com](http://www.glacier.visitmt.com)

Gold West Country—[www.goldwest.visitmt.com](http://www.goldwest.visitmt.com)

Missouri River Country—[www.missouririver.visitmt.com](http://www.missouririver.visitmt.com)

Russell Country—[www.russell.visitmt.com](http://www.russell.visitmt.com)

Yellowstone Country—[www.yellowstone.visitmt.com](http://www.yellowstone.visitmt.com)

#### Convention and Visitor Bureaus

Big Sky—[www.bigskychamber.com](http://www.bigskychamber.com)

Billings—[www.billingscvb.visitmt.com](http://www.billingscvb.visitmt.com)

Bozeman—[www.bozemancvb.com](http://www.bozemancvb.com)

Butte—[www.buttecvb.com](http://www.buttecvb.com)

Flathead Valley—[www.fcvb.org](http://www.fcvb.org)

Great Falls—[www.greatfallscvb.visitmt.com](http://www.greatfallscvb.visitmt.com)

Helena—[www.helenacvb.visitmt.com](http://www.helenacvb.visitmt.com)

Missoula—[www.missoulacvb.org](http://www.missoulacvb.org)

Miles City—[www.milescitymt.org](http://www.milescitymt.org)

West Yellowstone—[www.destinationyellowstone.com](http://www.destinationyellowstone.com)

Whitefish—[www.explorewhitefish.com](http://www.explorewhitefish.com)

#### Visitor Information Centers

Broadus

Culbertson

Dillon

Hardin

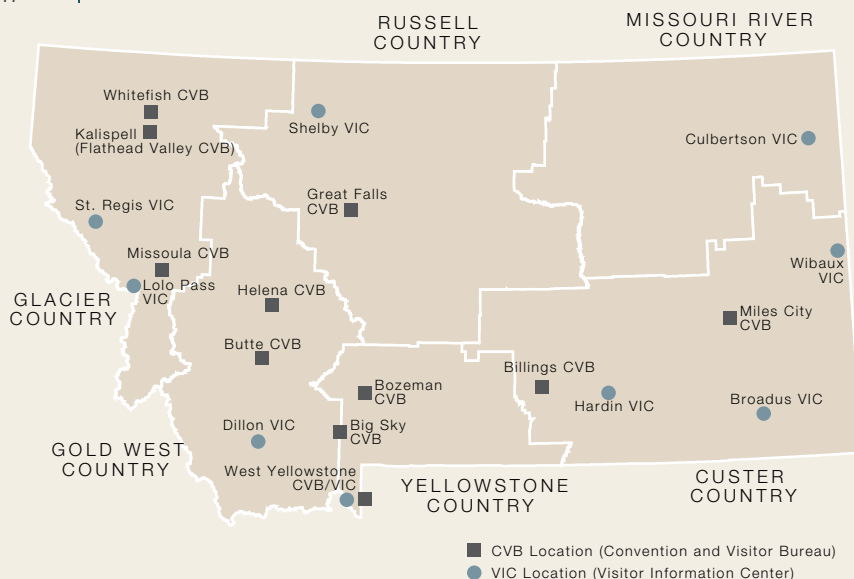
Lolo Pass

St. Regis

Shelby

West Yellowstone

Wibaux



### Online Resources

[www.visitmt.com](http://www.visitmt.com)—Travel Montana's main web site

[www.wintermt.com](http://www.wintermt.com)—Montana's winter site

[www.montanakids.com](http://www.montanakids.com)—Specifically for kids

[www.travelmontana.mt.gov](http://www.travelmontana.mt.gov)—Travel Montana's intranet site

[www.fwp.mt.gov](http://www.fwp.mt.gov)—Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks

[www.mt.gov](http://www.mt.gov)—Montana online

[www.itrr.umt.edu](http://www.itrr.umt.edu)—Institute of Tourism & Recreation Research (ITRR)

[www.montanaheritagecommission.com](http://www.montanaheritagecommission.com)—Montana Heritage Commission

[www.montanahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.montanahistoricalsociety.org)—Montana Historical Society



# MONTANA'S TOURISM FUNDING

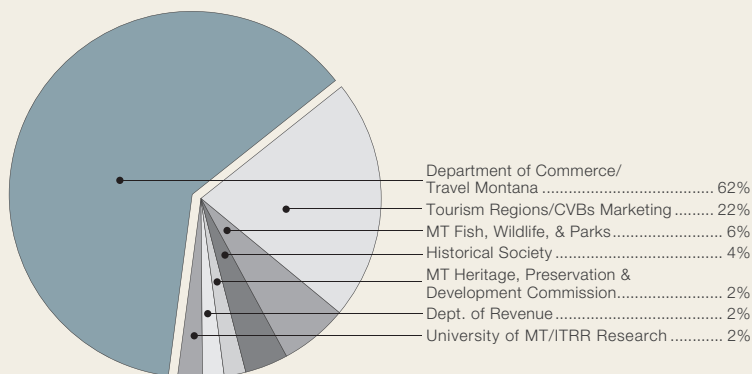
## An Investment...

Recognizing the significant contribution tourism makes to Montana's economy, the 1987 legislature enacted a 4% Lodging Facility Use Tax, commonly referred to as the "bed tax." Lodging facilities (such as hotels, motels, bed & breakfast inns, guest ranches, resorts and campgrounds) collect this tax from their guests. In turn, these funds are divided among the entities as shown in this pie chart.

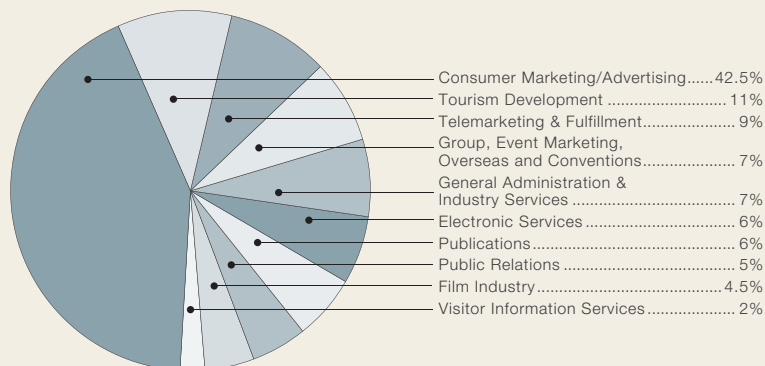
It should be noted that no additional money for tourism funding comes from Montana's general fund. In 2003, an additional 3% Lodging Facilities Sales Tax was added to the existing 4% and is deposited directly into the state general fund. In FY08, the general fund received \$13,389,534 through this additional 3% sales tax.

Twenty-one years after the legislature created the bed tax, its success is clearly evident. Today, tourism is one of Montana's largest and most viable industries in the state.

FY08 LODGING FACILITY USE TAX DISTRIBUTION  
(INCLUDING ADMINISTRATIVE APPROPRIATIONS)



HOW TRAVEL AND FILM PROMOTION FUNDS ARE SPENT (FY08)



## ...With High Returns

- Montana hosted 10.7 million visitors in 2007 which translates to 11 new customers per Montana resident for Main Street businesses.
- Our visitors spent over \$3 billion in 2007 which is new money for Montana's economy.
- Tourism and recreation businesses support 44,830 Montana jobs.
- Non-resident visitors had a total economic impact of \$4.3 billion in 2007.
- Visitor spending generated over \$235 million in state and local tax revenue in 2007.



Gasoline, Oil	28%	\$866,100,000
Restaurant, Bar	21%	\$656,000,000
Retail Sales	16%	\$485,600,000
Hotel, B&B, etc.	9%	\$288,500,000
Groceries, Snacks	8%	\$260,800,000
Auto Rental and Repairs	5%	\$145,200,000
Outfitter, Guide	4%	\$133,200,000
Licenses, Entrance Fees	2%	\$62,900,000
Transportation Fares	2%	\$62,000,000
Campground, RV Park	2%	\$50,100,000
Misc. Services	1%	\$44,300,000
Gambling	1%	\$30,800,000